

SECOND ADDENDUM: Revision to the ACEC Report - Expansion of the Greater Sage-grouse Habitat ACEC

In 2007 the Colorado River Valley Field Office (CRVFO) used the best available data on the Northern Eagle/Southern Routt greater sage-grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*) population when assessing areas that were nominated to be designated as areas of critical environmental concern (ACEC). Subsequent to that work several findings have occurred that have created the need to amend the determinations in the 2007 *Glenwood Springs and Kremmling Field Offices RMP Revision Evaluation of Proposed Areas of Critical Environmental Concern* for the Greater Sage-grouse Habitat ACEC.

Finding 1: Change in Status of the Greater Sage-grouse.

At the time of the report the greater sage-grouse was identified as a BLM sensitive species due to downward trends in its population. Species designated as BLM sensitive must be native species found on BLM lands for which BLM has the capability to significantly affect the conservation status of the species through management. Once identified, BLM's management focus for these species is conserving the species and their habitats and ensuring that actions authorized by BLM do not contribute to the need for the species to become listed for Endangered Species Act (ESA) protection.

On March 5, 2010 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) concluded that the greater sage-grouse warrants protection under the Endangered Species Act. As a result, the sage-grouse was added to the list of species that are candidates for ESA protection. As part of their decision the USFWS noted that habitat fragmentation and destruction across much of the species' range has contributed to significant population declines and if the trends persist many local populations may disappear.

Finding 2: New Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW) Data from Sage-grouse Fitted with VHF and GPS Transmitters.

VHF and GPS transmitters have documented that the Northern Eagle/Southern Routt greater sage-grouse population uses and depends on a larger extent of sagebrush shrublands in the northeast part of the CRVFO than was previously understood. The bulk of the local population resides or seasonally occupies sagebrush shrublands from the King Mountain/Sunnyside area (north of Burns, Colorado), across Castle Peak (including the Windy Point, State Bridge and Horse Mountain areas) to Wolcott, Colorado.

Conclusion:

The original boundary and acreage (10,700 acres) of the Greater Sage-grouse Habitat ACEC did not (1) conserve a sufficient amount of habitat (e.g., breeding, summer/fall, and winter) for this population or (2) address the range-wide connectivity of sagebrush shrublands necessary to sustain the population. The revised Greater Sage-Grouse Habitat ACEC is proposed specifically to protect 24,600 acres of greater sage-grouse habitat on BLM land (Map 1). The ACEC would encompass the southwest flanks of King Mountain, the northern tier of Castle Peak and the sagebrush shrublands north of Wolcott, Colorado. The CDOW believes this area to be priority habitat for the Northern Eagle/Southern Routt greater sage-grouse population (L. Rossi - CDOW, pers. comm.). Priority habitat is the habitat of highest conservation value relative to maintaining sustainable sage-grouse populations. The revised ACEC would better maintain the current available greater sage-grouse habitat on BLM lands considered as critical to conserving the population, necessary to maintain range-wide connectivity, required to support genetic diversity and reduce vulnerability to local extirpation.

This addendum will revise the 2007 *Glenwood Springs and Kremmling Field Offices RMP Revision Evaluation of Proposed Areas of Critical Environmental Concern*.



Karl Mendonca
Acting Colorado River Valley Field Office Manager
Silt, Colorado